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A SUMMER WITH THE UNION MEN

HENRY SCHENKOFSKY, PH.D.

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A Summer with the Union Men

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A Summer With The Union Men

By

Henry Schenkofsky, Ph. D.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

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Harr Wagner Publishing Company

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A Summer with the Union Men

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A Summer with the Union Men

I: Introduction

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A Summer with the Union Men

Introduction

LAST summer when the Government was very much perplexed as to how the crops were to be gathered when millions of young men were called into training camps and on Government jobs, I, for one, answered the call and volunteered to stack over seven hundred acres of wheat. When I signed up with the harvester's league, which had representatives all over the western Slope, and I asked where my services might be most needed, I was told to go to Eastern Washington.

The lady at the office said that it got fearfully hot in those Washington hills and advised me to purchase khaki shirts, straw hat and overalls, as other pants would let in the wheat beards, and to wear the thinest kind of underwear, and strong leather gauntlet gloves.

I bade the small congregation adieu, for

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which I had been preaching in Oakland, and made all necessary arrangements to go.

My wife thought that a little Ocean trip would be good for her too, so we decided to have her and my son accompany me as far as Seattle; and there they could rest a few days and then return as she wished the Ocean trip more than anything else.

About the middle of June we left San Francisco on the (Great Northern) steamer. It was a foggy and rather stormy morning to start with, and we were rather late in getting started, but at last we pulled out of old Frisco. As the boat was making her way through the Golden Gate she commenced to rock and the wind blew fiercely. We went down to our room to make ready to go below to the dining room. Our state room was very comfortable indeed but it proved to be entirely too attractive for we were not all of us able to go on deck for another moment during the entire trip of about thirty hours. I, myself, had a few years previously, taken a trip to Europe and returned, suffering very little inconvenience

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from sea-sickness, but the sight of my wife and little boy constantly resorting to their emergency cups proved to be too much for me, and I, too, in a short time succumbed to the habit.

Of course no one said much of it until we had entered the mouth of the wonderful Columbia river, but we did afterward hear it said that we had experienced one of the roughest trips that had been known for years, on that part of the sea. Then, too, the fact that we were traveling north made the going harder as we were facing the current.

Before leaving home on Saturday we had had rather a hearty breakfast as we knew that lunch on the boat would not be served until after one o'clock. We, however, had to forego the pleasure of partaking of the excellent luncheon which one will always find served on these vessels. Not only that, but our places were vacant at dinner and at Sunday breakfast. Doubtless, we were not much missed but those delightful meals certainly were, and we began to notice their

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absence most perceptibly by noon on Sunday, so when the matron came to offer her services, and incidentally her sympathies by showing us the long list of room numbers whose occupants were in a condition like unto ours,—when she came we thought a little lemonade might brighten us up somewhat. We ordered two glasses with a few crackers. A boy was sent for them but we refused to accept them when he returned and presented also a fee of fifty cents. We had already paid three dollars for the little boy's meals alone and for which we had used not a mouthful of food so we felt that this was adding insult to injury and we continued our miserable journey without even this small joy.

But like the summer sun after a shower are the effects of an hour or two on the land following a rough sea voyage. So our delightful train ride from Flavel to Portland had its wonderful effect upon us and we were even better for the journey that was past.

After spending a short time in Portland

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I noticed that both labor and contractors were more or less restless, as to wages and war profits. Also, in riding on the train from Portland to Seattle I noticed that hundreds of acres of forest timbers were carelessly permitted to burn down right along the railroad. I said about that waste of timber, that such carelessness should be condemned and not even permitted; for, in not many years, we will most sorely need those timbers. Otherwise the scenery between those cities of Portland and Seattle is full of beauty and grandeur.

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II: I Visit the Labor Halls

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A Summer with the Union Men

I Visit the Labor Halls

HAVING arrived in the state with its thousands of acres of wheat, I found that the grain was green yet and that I must wait three or four weeks at the outside before the real harvest would commence. My wife and the boy having gone up to Stanwood to visit a friend there, I busied myself visiting the labor halls and the rooms of employment sharks to make as close a study of the real labor situation as possible.

I soon formed an acquaintance with several I. W. W. fellows. One of them suggested a plan by saying: "How would you like to batch it with us near the water front?" That's right, Jack, there is an extra cot; it is a hell of a place if you are not used to batching it. But hell! we get along fine." "Yes, and a darn sight cheaper than

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at the cheapest restaurant," interrupted Dick. "You have your own blankets, haven't you, Mr.——?" "Just call me Harry," I said. "No, I haven't any blankets," was my answer. "Hell, Jack, you have an extra blanket in your suitcase, and I have an extra blanket that I don't need since it is warmer." It was about five P. M. and we started for the shack, as I had assured them that almost anything would do for me, both to toughen me up for the harvest and for my health.

We stopped on our way to purchase a few chops and several loaves of bread. Jack said, "Things were so d— dull last winter that Dick and I took to batching." As we made our way through the crowd that was coming from work there was not much chance for conversation. Before long we arrived at the shack right near the water. "Harry, you will think this is a devil of a place," said one of the boys. "Just make yourself at home around here the best you can,' said Jack as he slapped his hat and coat on his cot. "We only pay a dollar a

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week for this d— place." "Yes, up town it costs us that for one night, that is, for two," said Dick. "Dick, you chop a little wood while I fix these chops for supper." "Wait till I light my old pipe." As he lighted his pipe he turned to me and said, "You smoke?" as he offered me the tobacco. "No, I never smoke." "Eh, you don't," he squawked. "Well, it is a pretty darn bad habit, but this here old pipe gives me a lot of comfort," he said, starting outside to chop wood. Jack turned to me with a chop in his hand. "We don't pay a darn cent for wood here,—use drift wood." It just seemed as if these men could not take a breath without swearing.

The shack was twelve by twenty and then there was a porch five feet wide partly enclosed with screen, gunny sacks, and boards. The water had to be carried from a pipe a few rods away. The cooking utensils and the furniture were all very crude. The shack belonged to an old lumberjack who had gone to Canada to work in the woods. He preferred renting it cheap to some of

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his I. W. W. brothers rather than letting it stand empty.

Both Jack and Dick seemed as cheerful as they could be until we started to eat. I sat on an old rickety chair,—the best there was; Jack sat on a soap box and Dick sat on a chair without a back. Our food consisted of chops, fried potatoes, coffee and bread. I enjoyed every bit of it immensely, but the men soon started to discuss the bitter feeling for the capitalist. Dick said: labor problems, and there was a noticeably "One of these days there will be a change and then we'll all have money."

After they had made a number of similar remarks, I asked: "Is there anything going on nights since the saloons are closed?" "O Lord, yes," remarked Dick. "They still raise a lot of h— here since the saloons went." After eating a good meal we took a stroll down town, listening to some Socialist and I. W. W. street meetings. A Socialist speaker said to his audience, speaking about war profits: "They can hardly agree whether they want to build wooden

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ships or steel ships to combat the submarines. One guy says there is more money in building steel ships than in anything else; then along comes another guy and says there is more money in wooden ships than in steel vessels; and mind you, I would not be surprised if a third guy will come along and tell the men it is best to build cement ships." At this the crowd cheered and laughed.

Some fellow came along with a bundle of papers. He did not want to sell them, but was giving them away, but he must raise five dollars from the crowd to cover the cost of printing. The amount was raised in a few minutes and everybody eagerly grabbed for the papers and soon all were taken or distributed among the crowd.

It was nearly ten o'clock and we went back toward our shack. On our way back we heard several men call, "Extra! Extra! Extra!!" Jack said, "What in the Sam hill is the matter now?" Next we heard them call out: "Woman slugger breaks woman's

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skull." We stopped and bought a paper and read the large black print under the arc light about the woman slugger who was at large. "By dad, every woman ought to carry a gun," hotly remarked Dick.

I was tired and enjoyed a good rest that night, in spite of the fact that I slept without any springs in my bed and a few gunny sacks only for my pillow. For breakfast we had flapjacks with syrup, an egg apiece, and coffee. After breakfast I shaved; Jack sewed a few buttons on his clothes, and Dick washed his socks. Jack said: "This is a h— of a life, but what is the use nowadays? It is hard for a single fellow to live decent. What would I do if I were a married man?"

Soon Dick said: "Harry, let's go to the hall. In a short time we found ourselves in the midst of a group of union men, mostly I. W. W. I eagerly read their signs. I noticed the honor scroll on the wall. On it were the names of the men it was stated had died for the cause of the working people. I also noticed that the secretary and

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the rest of the office force at headquarters were all dressed in workingmen's clothes.

They also showed me the fire escape where an I. W. W. member had shot a drunken sailor in the leg. A group of sailors tried to come into their hall to molest those present by breaking up furniture. The same thing had occurred previously. At first the sailors tried to come up the steps into the hall but the door was barred. Then the sailors sought entrance by the fire escape, and one of the I. W. W. members opened fire and hit the sailor, About two hundred I. W. W.'s were arrested, but all were turned loose again. Since then the sailors have not interfered.

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A Summer with the Union Men

III: Longshore Work

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A Summer with the Union Men

I Try My Hand at Longshore Work on the Docks

IN the afternoon we were walking along the waterfront, when we noticed large ships being towed into the docks. A squeaky-voiced foreman came running, all excited like a chicken without a head. "You fellows want to work? Two large shiploads of salmon coming in right now from Alaska, and not a damn man in sight." Dick said to me: "Do you care to tackle her? It may mean twenty-four hours of steady work, and they work a fellow like the devil here." "Sure, I will work," said I. We hurried into the large shed, took off our coats, and rolled up our sleeves. I heard the foreman telephone to some of the halls for about twenty husky men to unload salmon.

Dick and I were put to hauling low heavy

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trucks. Several strong men would load the boxes on the trucks as fast as we could run them through a door, not any too wide, on a large elevator, and as we would return we would always take an empty truck to be filled. Thus there was not a second's rest. Upstairs the same thing was being repeated except that up there the trucks were not pulled by hand but by an electric car. So Dick and I had the hardest job. I was sweating like a race horse. Dick said to me, "The devil with this job is that you can quit as many times as you want to and possibly get on again, but if you get 'canned' for not keeping up, the chances are you will never get on again. So you see that is the h— with this job." As he looked at me he struck the side of the door with his truck and a stack of boxes tumbled off, and two or three broke and the cans started to roll toward a hole in the floor. "Hey, you son of a—! Catch those cans before they fall into the water. Don't you know the company has to pay for them?" yelled a big coarse Swede foreman from

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above. The little foreman from the outside came cursing to see what was the matter. "Don't keep these men waiting out here. Get those loaded trucks in here." I was just wondering how long I would be able to keep up with that rushing work. Dick was used to hard work, but I was not. My muscles were soft and tender, but I meant to do my best.

The big Swede foreman came down in the large elevator with the empty trucks. As he looked outside and saw a number of trucks loaded, he said: "Hell, you fellows can't get these trucks in here as fast as they load 'em on outside. I will have to get another man."

I was just wondering if he was going to "can" me and get a husky in my place, but I was keeping up with Dick and had not even spilled any boxes. In a few minutes the Swede returned, bringing a broad-shouldered foreigner. "Here, you help these two men haul in these trucks. It's too damn hard for two men."

My limbs had started to tremble under

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me, but now we could haul the trucks just a little faster than the elevator man could take them up, so I got a little rest between times occasionally, and with a nice cool breeze coming over us, I was quite sure I would hold out until night. We were allowed an hour for supper, and at about ten-thirty P. M. the unloading of two ships was completed. When we got back to the shack, Jack had gone somewhere up town. Dick prepared a little lunch, but I was so near "in" that I lay down and watched him. "Harry, you surprised me today. I thought sure you would give out for it was all I could stand, before that other guy came to help us."

In the morning I was so stiff and sore that I could hardly get out of bed. It seemed that knots were tied in the cords of my muscles. That morning, having only a few blocks to walk, we were a half-hour early for work. About a dozen more arrived soon. I found that nearly all, without exception, were either members of some union or carried cards as members of the No.

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500 I. W. W. Some even carried I. W. W. cards in addition to their regular union cards, giving as the reason that it was the safest for each to lean toward the strongest organization. A few minutes before the whistle blew the doors were opened and the foremen arranged their groups. The requirements to be a foreman were, as nearly as I could observe, any man who had been there for some time, if he had an extra large vocabulary of profanity. Such a man was made boss over about a dozen men, and daily he would add to his vocabulary of profanity. Not knowing how to handle men, he would use this method. And another reason was, if he did not drive the men with some method he was in danger of losing his own job.

To be driven all day like a beast of burden under a heavy task of labor, and then to be chosen boss and drive others was considered a rather fat job. The boss did not have to work, and his pay was a little better than that of the men who worked under him. This, too, accounts largely for the fact

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that the workingmen are so brutal and mean toward each other. There is always a task master higher up, and each boss has to accomplish just about so much with his men or else he will lose out and become an under dog again in some group.

All that day Dick and I trucked gunny sacks, on two-wheeled trucks, with handles this time. The sacks had been shipped in from India. We had to load them into railroad cars for reshipment to the various wheatfields. They were in bales, each bale weighing eight hundred pounds. Two men would load the bales on our trucks, but we had to run the two-wheeled trucks over bumps up a slanting platform into the cars and then dump them just so, and a man in the car with a large crowbar would see to it that every bit of space was filled. Two layers were always put in a car.

For one man to haul eight hundred pounds on a two-wheeled truck was more of a beast's work than a man's, yet we had to do it and we must not be slow about it either. Once I hit a bump with the wheels

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and off came the large bale. It all happened because the things were so heavy to handle. I lifted until all seemed black before me, yet I could not get the bale on the truck by myself. I had to call for help. After that I was mighty careful whenever I came to that place. But towards noon I got so tired that there was not strength enough left in my arms to hold or balance the eight hundred-pound bale and push the truck over a bump, too. So after that I tried to do the lifting with the strength of my arms and the pushing with my head. I made the rough place with my load several times all right, when for the third time as I came along, I went a little fast in order to get a good start, I hit the rough place with the wheels just a little awkward, and flap! I was jerked over the truck and bale on the floor, or rather, hard pavement. Again I had to call for help. The boss came along and said, "Get a different truck; that ain't worth a damn." I was glad when five P. M. came. I did not care to work overtime, not even at seventy-five cents per hour. I

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could see then why men so often refuse to work overtime even for big pay.

The next morning, which was, by the way, was my last on the docks, I thought sure the worst had come. A large ship-load of tar barrels had arrived in the night. The ship had her own crew of husky Swedes to unload the barrels. They hoisted the barrels, three at a time, on the platform with a derrick and we had to roll them near the shed and stand them up on end. I rolled one to the side and then lifted for all I was worth, but the thing would not come. Dick said, "There is a trick to that, give the barrel a swing, and with the next swing as she goes up, put the weight of your body under the end of the barrel, and just keep her going." I soon caught on to that, but to get those heavy things in the right place so as not to waste space was still another problem. Dick said: "If that darn boss would not say anything you could roll them, and I would stand them up." It was in a way so much like football that I had played years ago in college that I soon

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got on to the whole thing. Toward evening I felt as if I had torn some of my insides out of place, and thought if I could only hold out until evening I would find out from the men all about that place that I still wished to learn without killing myself.

Just then the boss said: "Hey, you fellows, you will have to pile them barrels two high, and on end, or else we will not have room enough." Travelers that go to Europe tell us how men carry their trunks on their backs, but if some of these same people could see how men have to lift and tug right at home, with all our modern machinery, they would have no story at all to tell.

As I helped a Swede who leaned over the boat to tighten up a rope, he said in a low voice so only a few of us could hear it: "Say, you fellows don't want to ship to Alaska now, for there is a hell of a big strike on up there. We met some fellows that came from there." "And a big strike on in Canada, too, among the lumbermen," another replied.

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IV. Seattle and Tacoma Car Strike

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A Summer with the Union Men

The Tacoma and Seattle Street Car Strike

AFTER going around with open ears for several weeks, to hear what the men were talking about in labor halls, at the Government employment room near First Street, and in the Central City employment rooms, as well as down town where labor leaders and would-be labor leaders and radicals held their street meetings, I noticed that a rumor was going around among the men that there was an increasing evidence of an imminent street car strike in Tacoma.

A few more days and the papers took it up and the strike was called, for the purpose of gaining an increase of wages. The company refused to grant the increase and was unwilling to recognize the union, and further made threats that if the men did not return to work under old conditions

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the company would send for strike-breakers. This created a great deal of sympathy in Seattle among the union men, and even among the I. W. W., and the new union called the Shingle Weavers' Union. But the company would not budge. All labor being well organized in Seattle, the street car men of the city saw their chance to show their sympathy for the Tacoma men and at the same time the opportunity was open for them to win their much-needed demands. A rapid canvass was made in Seattle, which proved that ninety per cent of the car men were married men and the average salary was but sixty dollars per month.

A meeting of the car men called at the labor hall, and the calling of a strike was the result. Now the storm had begun. The car company refused to do anything whatever, but sent for eastern strike-breakers. In the meantime several scabs tried to run the cars without police protection, which they could not get at this time, as the policemen refused to ride with the scabs.

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The first man that tried to run a car was said to be a fifty-thousand-dollar stockholder in the company. The strikers fixed him up in great shape and sent him to the hospital and the car was taken back to the barns.

Strike-breakers from the East were rolling in by the trainload. The street car barns were hurriedly transformed into a regular army fort. Beds, food, etc., were hauled to the barns for several thousand strike-breakers. Then the barns were guarded by gunmen. This looked rather discouraging at first for the car men. So a great demonstrative parade was arranged for. Everything was well arranged. A fine brass band headed the procession. The men had on their uniforms. They started out four abreast, the leader bearing a large U. S. flag. Women and children stood and handed the men flowers as they passed. A number of boys and girls also marched beside their fathers in the parade.

A large painted sign was carried by several men as they marched through the

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streets which read, "We are patriotic, but we need justice as well as the people in France." Other banners of similar nature were carried in the parade. After the parade a rousing speech was made in front of the labor hall. The speaker ended his speech to several thousand people by saying: "God help us that no one but union men will start these cars." A mighty roar of shouting and the clapping of hands went up from the crowd.

The strike-breakers were a fierce looking bunch; possibly most of them were carrying guns. Some of these rough-looking customers started to run several cars one day, and as soon as they got to the crowded streets, bricks came from every direction, even from second and third-story windows. The car windows were broken, and the men injured sufficiently to make them willing to take the cars back to the car barns.

The Stone and Webster Company asked protection of life and property. But the police did not want to risk their lives to protect an army of undesirable men whose

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business it was to scab for good pay and then go elsewhere to do the same thing.

When the Chief of Police asked several men to ride with the strike-breakers or quit, they did quit; but the whole police department seemed on a verge of going on a strike, too, so the scabs had to remain at the car barns. When any of them were caught on the street they were arrested and thrown in jail for carrying concealed weapons. The whole thing was wild West again for sure.

The street meetings of the I. W. W. and Socialists continued every night. Many hard things were said against the company that had made its silver and gold in these western cities and now tried to enslave its employees. Mayor Gill himself was with the street car men. All newly made rules against jitneys were suspended and everybody was permitted to haul passengers. The larger firms, such as Sears, Roebuck & Co., and many others hauled their own help in private trucks to and from work.

The fierce strike-breakers had to be sent

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back East from where they came. And the street car company had to settle with its employees.

This was another evidence for the whole world, what a union of men, whether I. W. W. or something else, can do, if all are united for one definite cause. While everything was yet greatly disturbed and excited about the street car strike, the Wells Fargo Express men went on a strike for higher wages. When the first scab started out with a team, a large number of men ran into stores and purchased dozens of eggs. Then, while several dray wagons blocked the street for the scab, the men covered him with eggs; the team was left in the street and Mr. Scab ran for safety. However, that demonstration was very small compared to the car strike.

I met a number of lumberjacks, who were almost without exception I. W. W. men. They were bitterly complaining that they had to work ten hours, when even President Wilson had said in his speeches that eight hours were enough. I said right

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then, "These lumber companies better give these men their eight hours and have peace; if not, the Government contracts are going to be delayed and the shipbuilding industry will be crippled." But most of the companies would not listen and had no notion of giving the men the eight-hour day.

During the meantime I was still batching with the two I. W. W. men in the shack, for I was gaining knowledge faster about real world problems and human nature than I had years ago in the university.

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V. The Red Side of the City

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A Summer with the Union Men

The Red Side of the City

ONE morning a man, who had just returned from Dayton the night before, came to our shanty just as we were eating breakfast. He had some time ago worked for one of the warehouses on the waterfront. He wished to go and see if there was an opening, and asked us to go with him. He and Dick walked ahead. When we came to a large apartment house, they turned to go in and asked Jack and myself to come along. They walked upstairs and we followed. When we got to a certain door, the new fellow knocked. A lady opened the door and asked us in. I was still under the impression that they had come to see a friend of Ed's. But I soon learned they did not want to see any one, but wanted to get a drink.

The lady said, "Boys, do you want a

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drink?" "Yes," said Ed. "Got some good stuff?" "You bet, the best whiskey you can get anywhere." I said to myself, "What am I into? Isn't Washington bone dry?" She poured just about a swallow into each glass for four. I refused to take the glass intended for me, so the man staying with her drank it. Then she offered me a cigarette, which I also refused by saying, 'I never use tobacco." But she gave one to each of the other men.

As she lighted her cigarette, Dick said: "How is the whiskey sale now?" "Well, we clear about forty dollars a day now," she said. When we got on the sidewalk again I asked Dick how they could carry on the liquor sale in an apartment house and not get caught. "Well," said Dick, "they pay a little more rent than the rest, and tip the lady that takes care of the rooms."

That evening Ed brought a friend of his over who had just returned from a trip with a group of moonshiners, of which he had been a member. Ed's friend told us

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how several weeks ago a number of moonshiners had bought a simple outfit to go out into the woods and manufacture their own whiskey. They also took guns and dogs; not for use, but for an excuse to be out hunting if any one should get on their trail. They had not gone far into the woods when a game warden started to follow them. They just noticed him in time so as not to shoot a shot, nor did they turn their dogs loose. They kept going and he kept on following. But they would not shoot at anything nor let the dogs loose. This was kept up for three days. Toward evening when the men as usual fixed for a night's camp, they prepared a good mess to eat. But they were almost sure to kill that warden, because he followed them when they did not hunt.

Just as they sat down to eat, who should come to their camp but this game warden who had been on their trail all this time. He was nearly starved and now begged for something to eat, but they were so angry at him that they cursed him and refused

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to give him a bite. He left them and never returned, so they stayed and made enough whiskey for a small fortune. I was also told that quite a number of moonshiners were manufacturing the stuff on a small scale right in the city.

I also got acquainted with a group of generous drinkers, who said they got whiskey easily enough, but that it was expensive. They said: "In speaking of whiskey among ourselves we call it white mule. We claim we are painters when we wish to buy more and tell the man who has the permit to sell it, that we wish to slack paint with it."

One day Dick wished to get a bottle of white mule, so he signed up for it, and stated that it was to slack paint. In a little while several fellows sent him after some more. The clerk said: "Say, weren't you in here about two hours ago?" "Yes," replied Dick, "but I want to go out of town early tomorrow morning to paint a man's house and you will not be open yet and I will not have enough to slack my paint."

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The clerk sold him the second bottle of whiskey without asking Dick to sign for the second. Dick said, "He knocked down that second bottle, but I don't blame him for it. He has to work seven days out of the week, so he needs to make a little extra."

In a nearby shack from where we batched it, an old moonshiner from the South offered to teach two young fellows how to make whiskey. It was very simple. They got their tube, copper kettle, corn, and went at it. In about a week there was a large enough batch to make a large bucket of the liquor. On Sunday afternoon when one of the young fellows was gone, the old southerner came along to examine the batch. He said to the other fellow, "Let's have a little." So they started to drink. "It makes good beer right now," said the old fellow. And they drank up the whole business until there was nothing left to turn into whiskey. When the young fellow returned and saw what had happened while he was gone he was very much excited over the incident.

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They expected to make a hundred dollars a day with their little plant; however, they expected to get a number of kettles more. I left the community too soon to learn their final outcome in the whiskey business.

I also visited the down-town dance halls with a number of I. W. W. A number of old saloons were turned into dance halls. Most halls were large. About half of the floor space was fenced off for dancing. Over head was a kind of balcony for a small orchestra. The other half of the floor space was for the public to stand and look on, of which there was always a large crowd.

A dozen or more girls were hired by the management to dance on a commission. When the music would commence the girls would go into the crowd and beg the men to dance with them. There was a certain fee for each dance, of which fee the girl received one-half. After the dance the girl and her partner would walk up to the bar and buy a soft drink, for which the partner paid. If she could get him to dance a long

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time with her, she was making her money for each dance and did not have to ask any one for a while, but as soon as he did not care to dance any longer, she had to go and rustle for another partner. Besides a commission the girls would get tips from fellows. In that way they would make several dollars a night.

There were usually two men who would run a hall; one to call out the dances, and one to sell the soft drinks. "Next will be a turkey trot," was one of the favorites that the men would call out. The orchestra was of very poor quality, because it was of the cheapest that could be procured. The music was all raggy.

The men who looked on were anybody and everybody. Very many were men in overalls and high-top boots, who would not be caught in an uptown dance hall. Some were half drunk and could not dance, but would just walk and keep step to the music. The girls did not introduce themselves, nor did they ask a fellow's name. Just from a business standpoint a girl would come up

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to a man and ask him if he would dance with her.

Many soldiers and sailors, too, came to these dance halls. Some were about half intoxicated and there took their first lesson in dancing. I did feel sorry for the poor girls, as so many men would step on their toes and yet they must be pleasant. The ages of the girls were from sixteen to thirty-five. The girls were neat-looking and good dancers. As far as the men were concerned, everybody had a right to dance, well-dressed or in overalls, whether sober or drunk. As to the character of the girls, there were both good and bad.

A striking feature was to see so many Japanese women barbers in the down-town district. I was told on good authority that not all of these women are of good character, some of them making quite as much from the immoral or night life, as they do at their barber trade. These Japanese women barbers are quick at their trade, and have a large patronage among white men.

There are some things we would rather

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omit; at the same time people who are so willing to give up their country homes when things do not go any too smoothly, and come to the city to work for wages, or to go into a small business, are exposing their sons to great dangers and temptations, for lewd women in certain streets ply their trade by day and night, by sitting at the second-story windows and trying to coax every man and boy that they think could be roped in. The thing was so bad that Uncle Sam's officers were afraid to have the soldiers in the city, and even forbade soldiers going to the city unless the city would clean up some of these evils.

So degrading things are that black men will be found with white women of the night life, just because the black men are willing to pay larger sums for that privilege. On the other hand, many white men are found to patronize black women of the night life. To use their own words, "It costs them less."

The public should also know that this night life is not only carried on by some

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so-called poor trash down town, but also in the better districts of the city, under a different cover and system. There was one large building, beautifully built and clean in appearance in every way from without. It had a sign, "Ladies' Grill," and was a hotbed for lewd women. There was a large hall with small tables and chairs. A large number of most elegantly dressed women would sit at these tables and wait for men to come in. As soon as a man would come in, the women who did not have partners would wink at him. And it was up to him to choose at which table he wanted to sit. As soon as he would sit down by a woman a waiter would come and ask what they wished to drink. The man would order some soft drinks for himself and the strange woman. After that she would get up and ask him to follow her at a distance to some hotel, for they would not run the risk of being picked up by the police. The hotel keepers would not run any chances, so the man and the strange woman had to register as man and wife.

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There was another place in a very respectable part of the city which was visited. In order not to be noticed as to our purpose, I was accompanied by my sister-in-law. We descended a beautiful white marble stairway which led directly from the sidewalk. The entrance was much the same as one often sees leading to first-class barber shops in many large cities. About two-thirds of the way down the steps turned to the right and we entered a large, clean, beautifully furnished and well-lighted room. The floor space was really over-filled with small round tables, each covered with a dainty white cloth. At the farther end of the room an open space was reserved for the entertainers, who were three in number. They were elegantly and tastily gowned and took turns in stepping out a distance from a sweet-toned piano to sing rag-time songs, both the words and the music of which were of variable quality. One of the three was noticeably of a weak character, but of the other two one was constantly wondering how, in the name of all that is good, they

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could possibly bring themselves to such a level. The words of the song, the eyes and the movements of the singer were all directed to the end of making the richest catch of the night, for it was wholly apparent that these performers were the masters of the trade and most certainly intended to reserve the owners of the fattest purses for themselves.

At this place, as at the other, supposedly "soft" drinks were served, for which fifty per cent above the usual price was charged; judging from the price of the grape juice which we chose as it appeared to be the "softest" drink offered. When we entered the place there were a number of men sitting, each at a separate table, each also apparently pretending to wait for nothing.

Soon a fairly well-dressed woman comes tripping down the stairs, also pretending no purpose whatever. With a quick glance over the available field she makes her way to a certain spot, seats herself and with her eyes motions a man to her side, who gives an order for her, after which they leave,

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sometimes together and sometimes one about two minutes before the other. One such couple we passed the next morning near noon when they were apparently going out to breakfast.

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A Summer with the Union Men

VI. The Lumber Strike

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A Summer with the Union Men

The I. W. W. Lumber Strike

UP to last summer the lumberjacks were poorly organized. But in the latter part of the spring the I. W. W. men went to work in these camps all through the western lumber industry and got the men to join their union. And as it happened, nearly every man did join. After being well organized and seeing how lumber companies were enriching themselves from the labor of the lumberjacks, the union men thought it a good time to demand some of their rights.

The first request that the union men petitioned for was an eight-hour day. But most of the lumber companies sternly refused this very reasonable request. However, a few camps offered to work their men eight hours only. For this scheme the lumberjacks were too wise. Those few camps that were will-

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ing to give the eight-hour day employed but a small percentage of the men, whereas, of course, all should have the benefit of the eight-hour day.

Eight hours a day is long enough for the men that work in these camps. The lumber industry is not like the harvest field or the fruit season. The lumberjack's job is a steady grind the whole year round. And if he is forced to work more than eight hours he becomes dull and brute-like. Even now many of them are like machines or working horses. At ten hours a day there is not enough time to think, read, or to do anything constructive. And consequently the men can't save money, nor work up, but be industrial slaves.

The second request that the lumberjacks put to the cold-hearted lumber companies or employers was that of cleaner and better living accommodations. This just request was also turned down. The employees said: "Why should the patriotism of the employers consist of making millions from war contracts when at the same time they were

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keeping their men in slavery? Why not have a little justice and democracy in the lumber industry?"

Seeing no other way but to strike for their just requests, and at the same time knowing the strength of their organization, one camp after another went on strike. My, how those wobblers did roll into the larger cities. Telephone and telegraph messages were kept from those camps where the lumberjacks did not know that a strike had been called. Guards were even thrown around the camps to keep men away who wished to notify the men who intended to strike, who were waiting for orders when all were to strike.

In one camp the guards were outwitted by a union man by night. The lumberjacks were notified at twelve o'clock at night that a strike was on; all demanded their checks at that midnight hour and before morning the men had all deserted the camp and were on their way to the city.

Train after train brought the men from the camps until the city literally swarmed

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with lumberjacks. It was an easy matter to call three thousand men together either for a street meeting or a meeting in some hall.

That strike in less than two weeks' time affected the whole lumber industry on the Pacific Slope. Shipbuilding was hampered tremendously, and to get the right kind of wood for aeroplanes was simply out of the question as long as the strike was in full swing. Some employers tried for a time to get non-union men, through the employment sharks, to take the places of the strikers. However, the non-union men who were looking for work were put wise to the employers' tricks and would not accept the places vacated by the strikers.

Then the employers hoped that the men would be starved out in a short time, and then must go back to their old jobs again. But this time the men did not spend their hard-earned purses as they had done theretofore, for there wasn't the saloonman with his money-traps when the men came in from the camps. One group of twenty men were

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arrested as vagrants, but when the judge was about to give them a fine of thirty days in jail he discovered that this group of men had over three thousand dollars of wages in their pockets, so they were turned loose without a charge against them. A large number of the men opened bank accounts, in order that their money might last just as long as possible to win the strike.

The union men or lumberjacks were not able to get their side of the story into the daily press, at least not sufficient mention to get justice, yet they had a way to inform their own men by posting notices and news on the walls of their halls. Thus the lumberjacks were well informed as to what was going on, although the public was kept ignorant.

Several hundred soldiers were sent into the woods to get out the timbers for airplane wood, but this work was not enough to even make an impression in that huge industry. When the Government finally threatened to take over the lumber industry,

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the employers were not slow in trying to come to some agreement with the men.

If you think there are no women I. W. W. you are mistaken. I visited an I. W. W. meeting one Sunday night on Seventh and Union in Seattle, where Kate Saddler kept over three thousand wobblies spellbound for three hours with her logical arguments in pleading with the men to be serious and faithful in getting better conditions for themselves and their families. She also pleaded for a higher standard of intelligence among laboring men.

There are others of the feminine sex who do not lecture, but write articles for such papers as will print what they write for the cause or the union. The I. W. W.'s have their own songs, as well as any other prominent organization, whose meetings are somewhat patterned after the church service. The songs are gotten up by I. W. W. men and women, and are sung at large gatherings. As to the real worth of the words or the tunes of the songs, I shall not attempt to give my honest opinion.

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Before I go on to the next chapter I shall mention the relations of the lumberjacks and the Y. M. C. A. Now, I am very loath to criticise any form of work of this organization. Yet in some movements or branches of the work there is a lack of wisdom or adequate knowledge on the part of some leaders who prosecute that particular phase of good work. For instance, the library management, in some camps, has rather disgusted the lumberjacks with our larger Y. M. C. A. when it should have won favor.

A number of poorly arranged books were placed in a shack in some camp. It was called a library, and according to the statements of the men who had been there for a long time, each man was to pay a dollar a month into the Y. M. C. A., which was to go to headquarters. In some instances, at least for a time, the employers were asked to take a dollar a month out of the wages of each man for the Association. This was all wrong. The Y. M. C. A. could have placed a man for full time, in charge of two or three camps, to look after the interests

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of the men, trying to find out what they like to read and get it for them, and furnishing shower baths and soap, which the Y. M. C. A. could get at wholesale prices, as the camps did not furnish these things. The Y. M. C. A. could have a room where a lumberjack might leave his Sunday suit of clothes. As it is, if he keeps it around his bunk, it is stolen. Some men make it a business to go around to the camps and take clothes and other things if they are left in or near the bunks. Money or valuable papers is about all that the men can leave at the employer's office in the camp.

The lumberjack should know that none of his dues go to headquarters, but rather that the central association is putting some money into the camp for his benefit. For the lumberjack, as a rule, is not any too religious. If the Y. M. C. A. would meet some of his needs when he is lonely in the woods, he would likely make the Association rooms his headquarters when he comes to the city.

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A Summer with the Union Men

VII: I Ride Hobo Style

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A Summer with the Union Men

I Ride Hobo Style

HAVING noticed a large sign for several weeks in front of an employment shark's office, I decided to investigate it, too. "Laborers Wanted," in large letters; then the wages were given: "Fare Free to B. C. We ship every day at 9:30 P. M." I noticed that a large number of men were signing up for those jobs. I went back to the office the next day, but to my surprise the hall was almost empty. Men would read the signs both outside and inside and then walk away. I stepped up to a man who was standing there, as I presumed for a purpose. I said to him: "Why is it that no one seems to sign up today to ship to Canada?" "O, hell! there is a strike where they have been shipping to, and as soon as word came that our members were to be used as scabs, they refused

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to sign up any longer." "O! I did not know there was a strike in B. C.," said I. "O God, yes," said the man; "the lumber in B. C. is shot clean to h— until they give the men better wages, and they will have to, so that's all there's to it."

This shipping business excited my curiosity. I prowled around there for the next few days, listening to the stories of the union men, and asking them questions on subjects that had to do with the labor problem. One morning I noticed that the employment sharks had changed their sign. There were many other employment offices in connection with pool halls or restaurants. In some old saloon building the old booze boss was now selling soft drinks and selling jobs on a commission.

The new signs read, "Laborers Wanted for Montana." Just what the work was, was somewhat indefinite and the regular scale of wages was also rather indefinite.

A large number of men were signing up to ship to Montana. Some were in need of work and money and would go any place.

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Others thought they would work a little while and then go over to Canada in time for harvest. Some had no definite plans; if the work and the pay would suit them they meant to stay. But there was also a kind of hobo class that either just wanted to go to that place or even further into that State. Insofar as the railroad was concerned, they wanted men to come to Montana whether they went to work for the men who contracted for their labor or whether they took advantage of a cheap fare to take up a homestead.

It was this hobo class that interested me most. A young husky Swede who had just bought a new suit of clothes, white shirt and collar, stepped in and told the employment shark that he, too, wished to ship to Montana. "This is just common labor," said the shark. "I don't give a darn," said the Swede, "I want to get out of this burg."

As soon as several other fellows were fixed up, the man turned to the Swede. "Now, you understand this is just common labor." "Yes, that is what I follow."

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Then the employment agent said, "Now, this evening, before you go, you must take off that collar and white shirt, and fix up a good roll of working clothes." "What in the Sam hill do you think I am, some U. S. Senator or Governor or something of that kind? I have never done anything else but common labor all my life."

"Well," said the agent, "if we don't hold you fellows down a little you will look too much like tourists, and there will be a kick coming for being so easy about selling jobs."

As I left the office, I met a large Irishman of about fifty years of age. He said to me: "You'd better ship out with me tonight." I replied that I could not very well do that as I was going to the harvest field in about a week or so. "Just let me tell you, I am not going to work at that d— job for which these fellows are signing up. I am going to work in the harvest field in Montana. There are about a dozen of us that are going to ship, but not to that contract job. That is dago work. I

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know," he continued, "for I have been on the road too long."

I became immensely interested in this shipping business. And perhaps I could discover some new facts about contract labor. I said to myself this would be a chance to have a lot of new experience while I am out for facts. I answered: "I would like to ship, but I don't care to ship to Montana." The good-natured Irishman leaned over to me. He had a big cud of tobacco in his mouth and his breath almost knocked me over; yet he tried to be just as friendly as he could. He continued in a low voice, saying: "Just take it from me, you can get off where you damn please and no one can stop you." I said: "But what of the baggage I must send, about twenty-five dollars worth of clothes and blankets?"

I had heard the agent tell a man that each one has to check his baggage to the place where he is going to work before he can get his pass. "Why, just let me tell you, sir," he continued in a low voice, lest any one should get wise, "there is a Jew

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who fixes up dummies. You can get an old coat, a pair of pants, a pair of old shoes, rolled in an old blanket with a small rope around it for a handle, all for six-bits, and it will pass with the rest.

At first he told me where the place was, but then he said: "I will go with you and show you the place. It's only a couple of blocks up. As we were walking to the Jew's place, the man said, "These damned Jews buy up this stuff as junk. They can sell it to you for a song, and make money at that." The Jew's store was a dinky little place like most down-town second-hand stores are. My friend said to the Jew: "Say, partner, this man wants to ship to-night and he needs a dummy." "I just sold the last one I had not over five minutes ago," said the Jew in broken English, "but I can fix him one in about three minutes." "Go ahead and fix one," I said. The clothes were very old and just about rotten, but the blanket was quite good, though soiled, and yet not good enough that any one would buy it to put on a bed.

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When the Jew had me all fixed up, I hurried to the bank to get a small check cashed, and then went to my room and dressed as nearly like a hobo as I could. Then I returned to the Jew's store for my baggage, and took it to the employment shark. I really needed a shave, but I was glad that I had not shaved, as I might pass the better as a laboring man without much red tape.

There were several men ahead of me. Each man had to pay the employment agent two dollars for the job, and he was making money. It was his aim to get enough men for a car and then not ship for a few days. He took my name; I paid my two dollars, then I handed him my luggage, which was thrown among the rest of the bundles that were to go. I was told to be on hand at the office about nine that evening. It was about 4 P. M. when I was all fixed up for this first shipping experience.

I was delighted for the way everything had gone thus for, with the exception of the fact that I was dressed like a hobo, and

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might be picked up by some cop, and then my plans for that night would be spoiled. Then, too, some one from home might accidentally meet me on the street, and I should hate to explain what I was just about to do.

The I. W. W. hall was not far away, so I thought that I might as well spend an hour up there. As I was coming in a soldier was just leaving. I asked an I. W. W. whom I had seen before: "Do any soldiers carry I. W. W. cards?" "Well, they may not carry their cards, but a lot of them are members of this local." I said, "What use have they for this union when they work for Uncle Sam? Besides, it means an extra expense." He said: "The idea is this. A lot of our men were drafted and, while they are as patriotic as anybody, yet they hate like the devil to be shipped out of the country for they fear, for one thing, that their jobs here will be taken by this here Oriental labor."

I continued by asking: "There are not so many Orientals in this State, are there?" "Yes, but these rich devils can easily enough

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make arrangements at D. C. to ship in several hundred thousand. That is, if the unions will stand for it. And the chances are they will do it anyway. So if a soldier keeps up his membership during the war, when he comes back he stands a better chance of getting a job here, even if not the same position he left."

I was told later on by some men that there are just hundreds of men in the Army that belong to the unions, and many of them carry their cards. And, of course, among the whole number there are a few radical extremists. However, a few of these radicals get into trouble who are not the real union men at all, do not keep up their dues nor anything else, but carry an old card even in the Army. Then the whole union is branded because of these extreme few.

About five-thirty I hurried back to the waterfront shanty to have a good meal with Jack and Dick before leaving. They had just returned from work. When I told them what I was up to, they both had a

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hearty laugh. Dick said: "Why not go on to Montana and bring back a couple of bottles of white mule (whiskey)? A fellow would make more than expenses and have the experience, too." "Yes, and wind up in jail for six months," I said. "O, the devil; you are not wise to the trick yet," said Dick as he leaned back in his chair and took several deep puffs from his old pipe. "A fellow don't want to put the bottles in his suit case nor in his trunk, for these railroad guys will get wise. The safest way is to put them in your blankets and check them right through and no one will get wise. That is the way a lot of them here get their booze."

Just as we were about to go up town Jack said, "Did you hear much about the fifteen I. W. W.'s they arrested today?" "No," I said, "just noticed a sign on the wall which read, 'don't forget to visit the comrades in jail,'" and then gave the visiting hours. "I be damned," said Dick, "what did they do now?" "Well," said Jack, "they found some dynamite near that new railroad

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bridge, and these stiffs were camping near by. They naturally took the whole gang, fifteen of them." "I am sure they were not all I. W. W.'s," said Dick. "Hell, no," said Jack, "only three had cards." "Yes, and I bet my old pipe they swiped those."

After I went down town it was a little early yet to go to the employment office. I stopped and listened to several Socialist speakers on the street. After that I walked into a dance hall for a few minutes. I did not look very prosperous, but rather like a hobo. Yet several well-dressed girls asked me to dance with them. But each time I refused with a polite "No."

As I looked at my watch I noticed that it was now eight-thirty and I must be on hand at the employment office. As I was walking along I noticed many young girls with discouraged faces—some selling cigars, others as helpers at shooting galleries, and similar places. Their faces betrayed them. Their future did not look bright. The prospects of being something in this world had vanished for them, and a deep gloom had

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taken its place. I felt sorry for those young girls. I said to myself, "There is a problem for some one to solve."

At the office the men seemed to come from every direction. My! what a rough-looking group we were. "An easy raid for the police," I said to myself. Each man was given his bundle. And then a young fellow marched us to the station, always keeping an eye on us, lest some one should give him the slip and sell his pass to some one else. We were not permitted to enter the waiting room where the other passengers were, but we had to go through a side door, where we were relieved of our baggage. Then we were herded in one corner until our car was ready. The young fellow that was herding us could not say a word without an addition of slang or profanity. Because he was well-dressed and we were not, he considered himself a master and far superior to us. I thought right then, how in the world can the people be such fools as not to save a little money, even if the wage is small, and thus keep

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from being slaves and dogs? And again I thought of men who have no trade that work long hours at drudgery and toil and soon lose all ambition for almost everything, and become slaves for task-masters.

Soon a side door was opened and we were marched to our car. The fellow said, when all were in, "Don't put anything overhead on them racks—it looks too damn much like tourists; you must remember you are traveling as laborers."

The car was an old-timer with no rug in the middle aisle; tobacco ashes on the window sills and on the seats. It had been a good smoker at one time. A number of the men lighted their pipes or cigarettes, and some even took off their shoes before the train started. The young fellow who had marched us into the car like so many sheep, instructed us how to send him liquor in care of the baggageman and then left the car. "My, he is an overbearing devil," one of the men said.

In a few minutes we were going about as fast as steam could carry us. Every-

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body seemed to talk as loud as he could so he would be understood. I soon discovered that there were several others that were not going to the Montana destination. Not a few were rather dubious about the job.

As we arrived at Everett, some of the men told others all about the awful tragedy at that place of a short time before. The sheriff and several other men had tried to clean out a number of I. W. W. men who were riding in a launch. As soon as the boat had been tied the officer and his men opened fire. The I. W. W. returned the fire and killed the sheriff. The engineer tried to get away, but the boat was tied. However, by turning on the full power the boat broke the rope and they got away, after several I. W. W. men also had been killed. The killed who had fallen overboard were picked up by the sheriff's friends and weighted down and sunk. But the I. W. W. comrades found the bodies anyway. After a long court proceeding the I. W. W.'s won their case and were set free. The men gave the reason for the

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sheriff's acts to be, that he was paid by rich mill owners to break up all forms of organized labor.

As we proceeded on our way everybody seemed to get hungry. Some had a little cheese and bread, or bologna; others had a few oranges and apples, while some had nuts. Others expected to get a sandwich before morning at some stop. And I am quite sure some of the men had neither food nor money in their possession. I was learning all the time, a little more, "how the other half lives." My sympathy went out to those men, about half of whom were middle-aged men, without a home, knocking around from pillar to post.

About four o'clock in the morning our train had to stop in town and wait for another train. Several of the men got off to get a sandwich and I decided to do the same. I noticed my Irish friend get off, too, and come to the lunch counter where I was. He said: "I think this is as far as I am going." I thought, "What is the use to go any further? I have had the expe-

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rience, and if I go any further it will just run up my expenses and car fare going back." So I, too, stayed in the restaurant and let the train pull out.

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A Summer with the Union Men

VIII. With Union Men in the Harvest Field

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A Summer with the Union Men

With Union Men in the Harvest Field

AFTER my return to Seattle one of the first items of black news that I heard was that the "Woman Slugger" had added another victim to his record, by sneaking up to a woman and breaking her back with some blunt instrument. I felt sure that such a demon would soon be caught, but even months afterward I heard that he was still at large doing his fiendish work.

During the many strikes the police department suffered, too. Some members had quit because they were in sympathy with the men they should arrest. And then the department was in need of more recruits to make the city safe. Jack said one evening: "I am going to try for a job on the police force tomorrow." Being somewhat of a husky, he was told to go to work that

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evening. When Jack came home after his first night's work on the force, he emptied his pockets on the table; a gun, black-jack, wrist chain, handcuffs, whistle, flashlight, etc. Dick sized him up and said in his usual profane way, "You would make a hell of a bull on the force." Jack said: "No more dock work for me. I have a city job now, and I am going to settle down in the next few months and get married and have me a home of my own." "The devil you are," replied Dick rather sarcastically, or even a little enviously. Jack said: "I am going to make good, and if luck is with me, I may some day be chief of police." I thought that was not so bad for an I. W. W.

I learned that harvesting would commence in a few days in the eastern part of the State. I asked Dick if he wished to go with me. After thinking it over he said, "I may as well go with you as stay here and batch by myself, as it is most too unhandy for Jack to stay at this damn shack, for you know he has to live a little more respectable since he is on the police force.

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He is talking about getting a room on Second avenue." When we told Jack that we were both going to the harvest field, he came nearly going along. For just the night before a cop had been shot from ambush in the very district where Jack was on duty. Jack said, as we were about to leave: "If I thought some crook would shoot me some night, I would quit the force right now and go with you fellows."

People tried to tell me that the I. W. W.'s were burning the wheatfields, and would likely kill us if we would go to work for long hours and low wages. We stopped at Walla Walla a day to take in the sights of the Ideal City. Here we found that many prisoners were working at different things on their own honor. We were told that very few break away, even if they are sure that they can make their escape. A policeman said: "Why, you can place these men in the harvest field on Monday morning all by themselves, and on Saturday night they would return to the prison." He went on to say: "We have the most modern and

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best prison system of the world right here in Walla Walla. We don't make slaves out of our prisoners, but men. You can't reform a man by abuse and maltreatment. He wants a chance such as he has never had, and if you can't trust him, he most certainly won't trust you . Of course, there are a few men whose minds are defective in some way, so that you never could thrust them upon the public. But that percentage is very small." Just then one of the trusties came from work, going to his lunch. The officer said: "That man has to serve five years for stealing less than five dollars worth of old copper, really junk. Now, I do not uphold stealing, but many men that belong to our big corporations steal more than a thousand times that much each year from the public and no one opens his mouth about it. This poor fellow even has a wife and child. It is the present system, you know," he said.

We left the officer and went to a restaurant, where we met several men who were going to work in the same community that

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we were. We left early next morning for our place of work. On arriving at our little town the farmers received us with open arms. Dick and I tried to work for the same man. But we were not so fortunate as all that. Dick hired out to haul hay for a few days at three-fifty a day, and for driving a team in the harvest field he was to get four dollars a day. This was a twelve-hour job. He did not kick about the wages, but the hours seemed unreasonably long to him, even if it was harvest time.

A farmer came to me and said: "The barber just told me you could stack grain. I have about eight hundred acres to stack. I need a damn good stacker. I will pay you six dollars a day and board if you will stay with me to the end." "How soon are you going to harvest?" I asked. "We are going to start tomorrow afternoon." "All right, I will go with you," was my reply. Dick was really sorry that he had not made a bluff at stacking. My boss would have

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offered just half the wage which he did if help had not been so scarce.

The farmers were all hoping that none would get an I W.. W. in their crew. The papers reported all the time of I. W. W.'s burning fields of grain, etc. The county would usually be given, but not a definite place. That was very misleading and kept the farmers in "hot water." But as a matter of fact, the farmers were hiring I. W. W.'s by the dozens, as I shall state more fully a little later.

"All right, Mr. Harry, get your bedding and let's go to the ranch." "I haven't any bedding of my own," I said. "I guess we can fix you up all right," he said as he got into his machine. He started at thirty-five miles an hour out of town, but did not go fast very long, for the road was all fine dust; we went up hill and then down hill, plowing through the dusty road; up hill we would go on low and down so fast that we were in a black cloud of dirt. On our arrival at his ranch, he told me to bring my suitcase, and he would show me my head-

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quarters. It was a granary for storing sacked grain. The walls were full of large cracks, and from one to three inches of fine dust on the bed and on everything else. "Now just make yourself at home," he said, as he left me.

I had a good suit of clothes that I wished to save, but where to put it was a question. After driving a large nail into the wall, I took a short limb of a tree for a hanger. Then I took several newspapers and pinned them around the suit and hung the whole business on the wall, where it stayed for six long weeks. I soon made myself useful by pumping water for a dozen horses and a lot of hogs.

At the table that evening the boss' daughter was very outspoken about the Industrial Workers of the World. She said: "I wish those I. W. W.'s would all be driven out of the country; they burn the ranchers' houses and grain fields." "Yes," said the Mrs. of the house, "They poison stock and wells." "Of course," the daughter went on to say, "there is nothing like that going on

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around here." "Yet you can't tell how soon they will get in here, too," said the mother. Just then the boss came in, planked himself down on a chair and started to reach for about two things at the same time. "Say, Harry, how could a rancher tell if he were to get an I. W. W. in one of these crews? For he could do a h— of a lot of damage here in these big grain fields at the price that grain is this year."

I said: "Some carry cards; others buttons, and as far as doing damage, here in these big grain fields, I don't think there will be any of that as long as they are treated like human beings." "We are paying good wages; the men ought to ask for nothing else," he grunted and thus went on to say: "I worked in the harvest field twenty years ago for a dollar and twenty-five cents a day. I don't see why we should pay any more now?" I said, "Just think what you are getting for your grain now." "O, well," he said, "the laboring class did not give us that good price; it is the demand, you know." I replied by saying,

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"Twenty years ago you paid fifty cents for your overalls, now these men pay three times as much; and for everything accordingly." "O, h—, you workingmen want everything your way. Don't the farmers pay more for their stuff, too?" It being the first evening, and as he was getting rather excited, and further, he would not reason, I decided the best policy was to quit arguing the labor problem any further that evening.

I was rather tired that evening so I went back to my headquarters (the granary) rather early. I was sitting on my bed, which was an old bunk, taking off my shoes and socks when Mrs. Green, the boss' wife, turned up. "You are not going to use my bedding are you?" she said. "Why, Mrs. Green, I haven't any blankets of my own." "Well, you men ought to furnish your own bedding. I just loaned those things to the hired men during plowing." Now, if I had just been a little nearer to town that night the boss would have been minus one harvest hand the next morning,

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for the bedding consisted of a dirty- worn-out overcoat, a torn blanket, and a very dirty piece of a pillow. That on a hard bunk, might make a good bed for a dog, but it did not for me.

Saturday night about nine o'clock I went to the nearest town, five miles away, thinking that I might get a shave. But there was only one dinky barber shop, and about forty men standing outside lined up to get a shave or a hair-cut. Some of us decided not to shave for several weeks at all. There was not a place in town to get a bath, while, in fact, every one needed a bath to wash off the sweat and dirt.

The crews all refused to work on Sunday in the community where I worked. The men simply could not stand it, to work from twelve to fourteen hours a day all week. And often the water was not good, and in some instances the food had too much of a greasy flavor.

The second Sunday about a half dozen harvesting and threshing crews met at a small river to bathe and wash their clothes.

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It was a great sight to see a large body of men washing their shirts, underwear, bandana handkerchiefs, socks, and some even washed their overalls or pants. Not all had brought soap, but there was enough to go around. Large rocks were used as washboards. Everybody was willing to share his last piece of soap with the other fellow or his stone to rub the clothes.

The sun beat down real hot, so it did not take long for the clothes to dry. The clothes were all spread on the green grass or on shrubbery, and while the men sat naked in a group smoking and talking about labor problems their clothes were slowly drying. The men were rather cheerful after a bath and a little rest. Being a group of one sex to themselves, their general sentences in their conversations were well seasoned with profanity. They did, however, agree that ten hours of labor a day in the field was enough even in the harvest field. And if one rancher had too many acres for one crew, he ought to run two crews. The men had also discovered

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that some men hire out to cut some four or five hundred acres for their neighbors besides their own. Then they are afraid they will not be able to make good or to get around in time to their own and the other man's, too, so they crowd their crews almost day and night. This was condemned and considered unreasonable by the men.

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A Summer with the Union Men

IX. The Problem of Rest

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A Summer with the Union Men

The Problem of Rest

SOME of the grain fields were so large and we were so far away after a few weeks of cutting that the boss thought we were losing too much time in going back and forth with the teams and the crew. There was an old shack and a large barn near the river, where we had several hundred acres of wheat to cut yet, so we decided to batch there. We took a cow, a cooking stove, cooking utensils and a lot of eatables to the new place.

The first night we tried to sleep in the barn on the hay. The hay was really grain cut before it was ripe. The mice and rats were at home there by the thousands, running over our faces and bodies all night. We got but little rest and at four A. M. we had to get up to go to work again. The second night I just placed an armful of hay

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under one of the header barges in the yard. On the hay I unrolled my bedding and went to sleep. After breakfast, just about sunrise, I started to roll up my bedding, and what did my eyes behold but two large ugly rattlesnakes asleep in my blanket. They had gotten cold crawling around in the yard, so when they found a warm place, they just crawled in and shared it with me. The crew talked about that all day.

Yet the idea of finding a safe place for a rest was not an easy question to solve. The third night two of us forked some hay into an old wagon box which stood on the ground. About twelve o'clock a large long-horned bull stuck his nose right in my face, for he could smell the hay. We tried to scare him away, but he kept on coming back, while we watched for him with a club. He did not harm us, but it spoiled our short night's rest, which we could but ill afford.

So we all returned to the barn among the mice and rats in preference to sleeping outside with rattlesnakes and wild bulls.

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The whole crew became much perplexed as to what to do about getting a little more rest those short nights.

There was a fine spring to drink from. But there was nothing around it, so the neighbor's hogs would get into it ever so often and make it all muddy for us. One noon the whole crew wanted to quit on account of the poor sleeping accommodations and the water proposition. I gave the boss a good lecture for treating his men like so many animals, who would help him out in a time when he needed them most; that regardless of good or bad wages men should be treated respectably if the farmers expected to get any help in the future.

I then talked to the men and begged them to stay, and I promised the men that I would build a fence around the spring in order to keep out the hogs in the future. All but two promised to stay if I fixed up the spring. But the boss absolutely refused to fix up better sleeping accommodations for his crew and all decided not to return to the same men next year.

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X. The Would-be Union Man

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A Summer with the Union Men

The Would-be Union Man

THERE is a degraded class of humanity waiting for the millennium when all property will be divided up, and they, too, will get a share. They board at garbage cans and drain the kegs for their drink. In Portland, Oregon, several of these garbage-can boarders were pointed out to me. During the day they would sit in the parks, etc., and in the morning or toward evening they spent their time going to rooming houses, apartment houses and to different hotels, where they would open the garbage cans and pick out whatever they thought they could eat or fix up to eat. After all, that class of people need but little, as they do not work, nor think, and not even worry, so there is little energy expended which has to be replenished by nourishing food. They also pick over the

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old clothes which have been thrown aside for the ash man to haul away. They can easily add to their clothes as fast as they can wear them out.

As long as they are well they are not really a public charge. They do little harm and no good whatever. In case they die without being sick very long, the medical students get their bodies, so there is not even a pauper's funeral expenses. However, in a case of a long spell of illness they are usually taken to some charitable institution, where they are a public charge.

Some of these men have a unique taste for liquor, and also a way of satisfying it. A tin can is carried and a number of kegs are drained each day in the rear of saloons or barrel houses. As there is always a little left in each keg and time is no object to them, they get all they need from day to day to satisfy that craving.

Now, to be sure, if these degraded men have an appetite and a craving for liquor which they manage to satisfy, they surely must also use tobacco, and how do they get

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that without paying for it? They use a simple motto when it comes to the demand and supply, "God helps them that help themselves." So they go and help themselves. Not by planting and reaping and the manufacturing of the narcotic, nor by stealing it from any one else, like many capitalists. These men simply go to the scrap cans which stand on the street curbs and fill their pockets with cigar stubs. Some chew them; others smoke them in old pipes.

In speaking to one of these interesting characters, of which we have quite a number in each city, I asked him, "Where do you sleep nights?" "O, where I sleep? Well, for the last three months I have slept in an old neglected graveyard. I used to sleep in old attics, etc., but the bulls got wise and had me locked up as a vagrant. Yes, I have been locked up thirty-two times in the city prison or in the county workhouse." "For how long would they lock you up at a time?" I asked him. "O, well, from ten to sixty days," he said. He went on to say in winter time he did not mind if

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he got thirty days in the work-house, but in the summer he hated to have to be locked up.

He told me of a friend of his by the name of Stone, who had been one of the finest cooks in the city. In fact, he had been cook for a long time in the largest hotel in the city, but drink had gotten the best of him until he lost job after job, and finally he could not hold any job any more. Then he began to beg from restaurant to restaurant, and toward the last he just lived out of the garbage cans and slept in old attics. He said, "And my friend died two weeks ago in an empty house. Some boys found his body and the city authorities made the medical students a present of it." The tears rolled down his cheeks when he told me of the end of his friend.

Then there is another class just a little different from the garbage-can boarder. This class does not stay in one place as much as the other nor do they confine themselves to the large cities only. It is a large army of migratory men that camp here a

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little while and there a little. They very seldom work for a meal and never for their clothes. They beg all they need, which is not very much. They have a hard-luck story that they tell, which brings them always something, if not in one place, then in another. Many farmers have a kind of religious motto, never to refuse a stranger a night's lodging, which of course includes supper and breakfast. It is safe to say that there are thousands of these well-meaning people all over the country. This army of restless men that will not work easily find these good places and inform their comrades about them.

Now, if you hear these men speak, they would try to give you the impression of themselves that they are tremendously interested in the present labor movements. They hold that the land should all be divided up and equally distributed; in fact, all wealth should be equally distributed, yet they never expect to work or even manage even if there should be an equal distribution. That class of men are not true representa-

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tives of any real form of socialistic movement, nor are they representatives of the I. W. W. movement. However, many of these men claim that they either belong to the Socialists or the I. W. W.

There is even another class, much different from the others just mentioned. This class of men will work at anything, and work hard, too. But they despise all forms of society and government. They carry a bitter hatred toward all who do not exactly agree with them. The members of this class will not save anything even if they get ten dollars a day for their work. They simply spend all, and yet they are fiercely jealous of any person who even owns no more than just his small home, or a little Ford car. All property should be for each and all, and every man that works should not only have what he produces, but much more. They claim that it is not their fault that they are thrust into this world, and therefore the world owes them something to start with.

They would live up everything, and let

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tomorrow take care of itself. It is a class of unhappy, reckless, shiftless, irresponsible spendthrifts, who won't reason nor change, but just hold to their narrow pet ideas. Their blood comes very near mingling with that of the most radical Socialists and I. W. W.

END.

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